

Clementine Hunter; History of Forgery

The talk will present a biographical sketch of the folk artist, Clementine Hunter, born in southern Natchitoches Parish in late 1887 and died January 1, 1988,

Around 2000 a group of paintings appeared on the market supposedly by Hunter but later found to be painted by Beryl and William Toye. The lecture will include details of the fraud and how eventually law enforcement took what became an extraordinary criminal case and prosecution.

The subsequent investigation and legal proceedings resulted in a case study of an art fraud that spanned over 35 years. Extensive work by the FBI and leading scientific and analytical experts exposed a great range of forgeries by the Toyes, including modern masters such as Matisse and Degas.

The lead agent from the FBI on the case, Randolph Deaton IV, and Joseph Barabe, Senior Research Microscopist, McCrone Associates, Inc., will present details of the investigation and successful prosecution.

Tom Whitehead, a retired professor from Northwestern State University, knew the artist and became her unofficial biographer. He co-authored Clementine Hunter: The African House Murals in 2005, and Clementine Hunter: Cane River Artist to be published by the LSU Press in the fall of 2012.